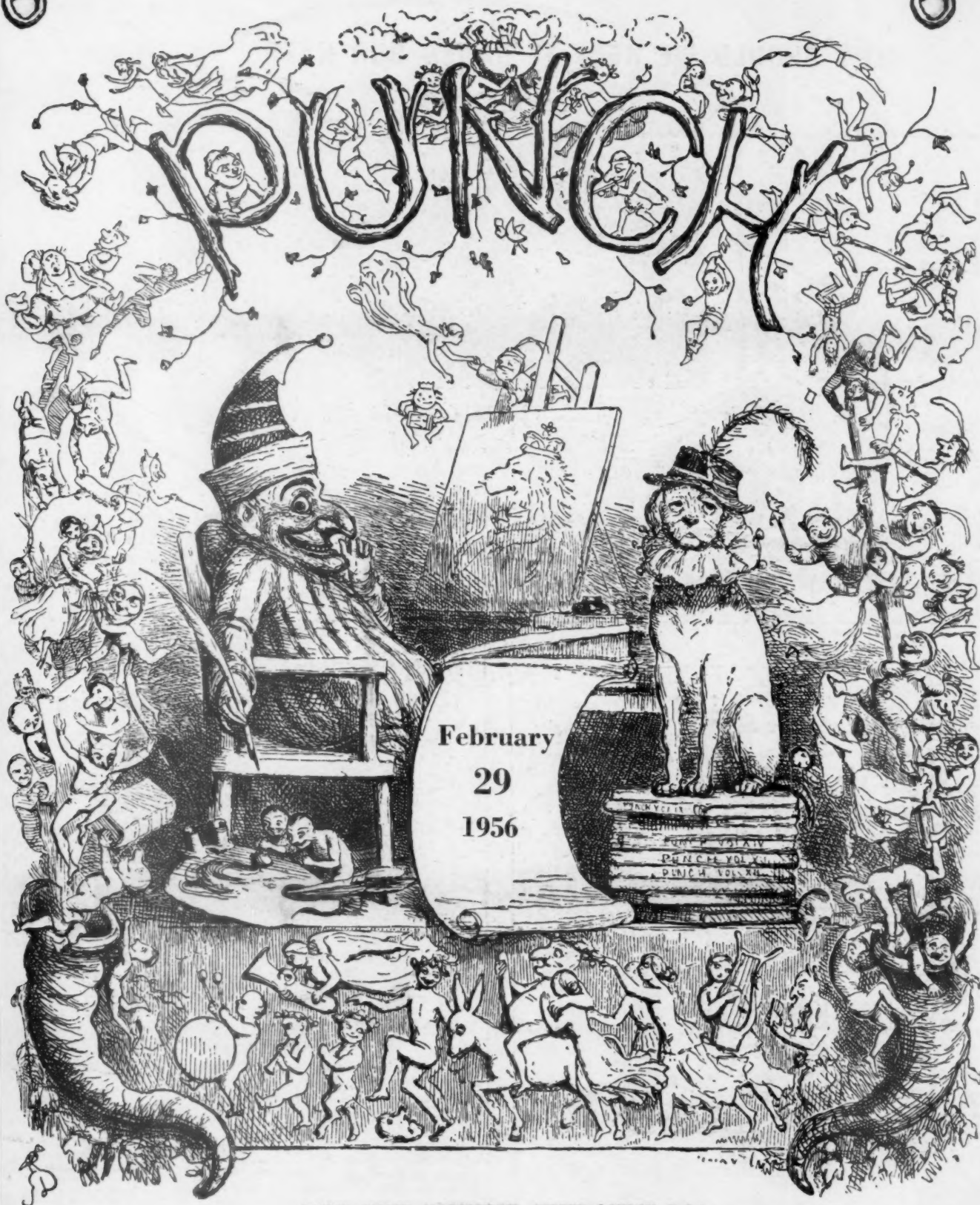


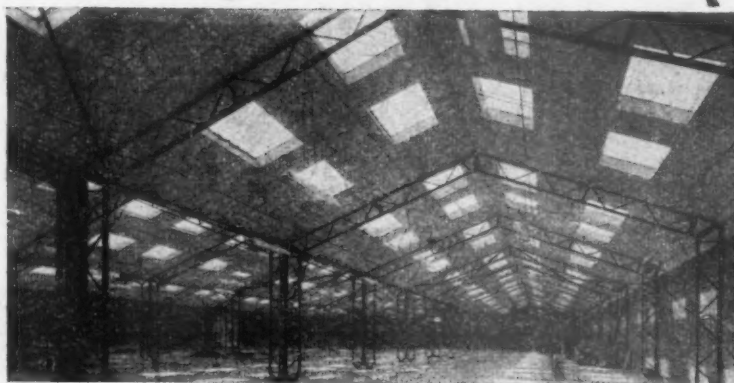
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PUNCH or The London Charivari—February 29 1956

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**£715** plus p.t. £358.17.0

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**Harris** the paint brush  
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## What makes you think of Ijora?

'Association of ideas, old man. That lorry's loaded with Johnson & Phillips cable drums. Now I happen to know that J. & P. supplied and laid all the power cables for the Ijora Power Station in Nigeria that has just been opened by Her Majesty the Queen.'

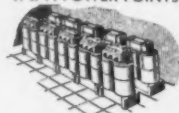
'You might just as well have thought of Liverpool Street. Didn't J. & P. do the cabling for the electrification of the Shenfield line?'

'I can well believe they did. Our engineers tell me that J. & P. are a pretty ubiquitous crowd.'

'Of course they don't stop at cables. They make transformers, switch-gear, and all kinds of electrical equipment —'

'Spare me the catalogue. J. & P. have done all our electrical work these thirty years. I know what they can do — and how well they do it.'

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A prospective customer eyeing this batch of early transformers — circa 1900 — must have entertained some lingering doubts as to the "black magic" of electricity. There was a lot we did not know in those days, and we got by on the principle of allowing "plenty to spare". The same principle stands the modern J. & P. transformer in good stead — as when in recent severe floods a J. & P. transformer continued to operate even while completely submerged:

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... not a cigarette you get offered in everybody's house, by any means;  
but how gratifying when you are! For Passing Clouds,  
ever since 1874, have been made for people who prefer a  
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## Hush . . . read your key!

Feel in your pocket. Read the name on your car key. "Wilmot Breeden?" Well, now . . .

This starts, if you are so minded, a train of thought. For Wilmot Breeden Ltd. is one of those organisations, very characteristic of British industry, whose activities touch almost every member of the public without many of them being aware of it.

You know, now, that Wilmot Breeden are concerned with ignition keys. It follows, reasonably, that they have a hand in locks as well. But how could you have guessed, from such a slender clue, that very likely not only the locks on your car, but the bumpers, the handles and the window-winders too, came from the same stable?

In fact, there are almost no British cars on the roads today to which they have not contributed something.

The name . . . hush! . . . is Wilmot Breeden. Founded 1927. Headquarters at Birmingham.





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TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN  
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THE NEW FORD LINE. Breathtakingly beautiful. Each of these three new cars—“The Three Graces”—is distinctively styled. Each sets the fashion with a balanced silhouette—long, low, wide. There’s room for six on the soft, wide seats. Sophisticated body colours and upholstery patterns complete the picture.

DRIVING IS EASIER AND SAFER . . . with wide-vision windscreens and wrap-around rear windows. New ‘over-square’ larger capacity engines run at lower revolutions with savings in fuel and engine wear. Automatic overdrive is available. These new cars offer the motoring you dream about at the costs you can afford.

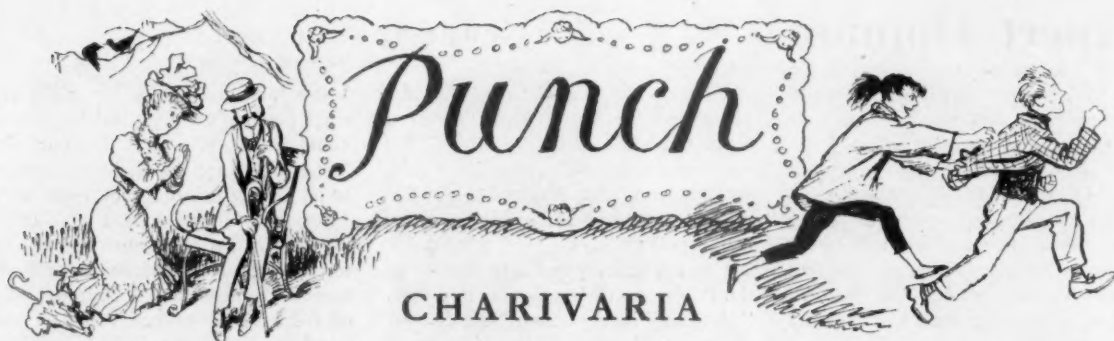
*See them at your Dealer's*



**‘FIVE-STAR’ MOTORING AND FORD SERVICE TOO**



*The best at lowest cost*



## CHARIVARIA

**W**ORKERS of the world were horrified when Mr. Ratcliffe, of the Musicians' Union, said to interviewers, "You would think we are running the B.B.C., but of course we are not." The whole movement could split and sink on arrant defeatism of this kind.

### Required Reading

THOUSANDS of women shoppers, if they take any notice whatsoever of questionnaires circulated to them by the Consumer Advisory Council of the British Standards Institution, will state "what information they want to see on the labels of the goods they buy." The majority may be expected to vote for a cut in the advertised price.

### Many a True Word

WHEN Epstein left the site of the T.U.C. Memorial Building, where he had been surveying the raw material for his commissioned sculptures, a foreman called after him, "Don't



forget to bring your card next time." The great man replied, according to a report, "These men always make fun." Sure?

### No Tilting

APART from periodic reports about beach-suit regulations Spain has been out of the news lately, and makes a refreshing come-back with the announcement, by the vice-secretary-general of the Falange, that the party is "neither reactionary nor counter-revolutionary, Fascist nor totalitarian." Spanish

university students, six of whose periodicals have abruptly ceased publication recently in Madrid and Seville, are relieved to learn that this is not because of any lack of national freedoms, but because—as the vice-secretary-general went on to remark—"any attempts to oppose the legitimacy of the Falange's position, to consider it transitory, to ignore or deviate from its principles, will be treated as subversive."

### Reduced Size

*Punch* is again unavoidably curtailed this week. We offer our apologies for any shortcomings and hope to resume normal issues when labour difficulties permit.

### Better the Day . . .

It is claimed by a vicar writing in his Birmingham parish magazine that Sunday afternoon is the peak period for petty pilfering, breaking down fences and other "so-called juvenile crime" on housing estates. It looks as if there might be something here for the Lord's Day Observance Society.

### Plenty of Third Secretaries?

Moscow's announcement that Russia and Syria have agreed "to raise the status of their missions in each other's countries to embassy" had little reaction from the ordinary newspaper-reader, apart from a passing reflection that it should lend a little more tone to any relevant spy-trials.

### Everything Under Control

"THE Taming of the H-Bomb," said a morning front-page headline, followed by the encouraging news that next year's big British bang in the South Pacific will lead to the control of

nuclear energy, show how to overcome radioactivity dangers, prove that the actual fusion of hydrogen atoms yields a stable element harmless to human life, and "short-circuit elaborate experiments into the harnessing of H-power." Readers were cheered and exhilarated until they turned to page two, where a photograph showed some S.E.A.T.O. generals throwing themselves face down to escape "a boomerang which went astray during a demonstration at Melbourne."

### Over-Warm Reception

By stepping to the footlights and applauding the audience for remaining in the theatre "during a fire scare" the



cast of a Broadway play once more demonstrated the essential simplicity of actors and actresses. It didn't occur to them that at Broadway prices it takes more than a fire to empty the seats.

### Stakhanovite Stork

LATEST, and possibly most significant, condescension to things Russian comes from an American doctor who after a study of the Soviet medical scene not only found that "in general the birth procedure in Russia looks pretty good" but even managed to avoid adding that, of course, women did all the heavy work.

### Five-and-a-Half

RALLY, rally, shire and county,  
Keep the State's finances steady,  
You who live by banker's bounty,  
Being penniless already.

## Expert Opinion

By CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

I FIRST met Tranbury when he came to lecture at school in the first years of the 1914 war. "We shall get the Greeks in on our side," he explained. "Edward Grey has offered them Cyprus—a most astute move. We only took Cyprus in order to have a base against Russia. Now that Russia is going to be our ally and Turkey will cease to exist, we have no more need of it."

When I was an undergraduate he came down to Oxford. He was then some sort of adviser to Lloyd George and his advice was, he told us, "to give the Greeks Smyrna and make them the predominant Power in Asia Minor. They are the only stable power in that part of the world. The secret of diplomacy is to back the winner." It is true that the day after his lecture news came through that the Greeks had expelled Venizelos and recalled King Constantine, but Tranbury was not abashed. "Venizelos's régime," he explained, "was by no means as popular or as liberal as it looked from the outside. Of course we"—by that he meant himself and Lloyd George—"have known this for some time, but it was not possible to say much about it so long as the war was on."

Then when the Greeks were beaten by the Turks in 1922 Tranbury explained: "People who did not know anything about it thought that the Turks were finished, but of course that was a great mistake. The Greeks were over-confident." Nevertheless difficult times were ahead because "it will never be possible to get the Greeks to forget their centuries-old animosity towards the Turks." When the Treaty of Lausanne was signed Tranbury was happy to think that it was by his advice that the Greeks and the Turks had agreed "to forget old feuds and to liquidate finally all outstanding problems between the two countries." He had had a hard task in persuading Venizelos to adopt this far-sighted policy, but he had succeeded.

When in the next year Mussolini attacked Corfu, Tranbury explained that people were making a great mistake in getting so excited about it. Mussolini was really more interested in domestic than in foreign policies. For reasons of

prestige he had to make one spectacular foreign gesture, but then, we would see, all would settle down peacefully. "It will consolidate the peace," he said. Only those who understood the Italian character could understand the meaning of the policy.

I met Tranbury again in Athens in the 1930s when Metaxas was in power. "Metaxas," he explained, "is a dictator of the second class. He had his military training in Germany. The Greek régime is really a puppet German régime. The game that the Germans are playing here is a fairly fly game."

When the Italians delivered their ultimatum in Greece in 1940, Tranbury was among the first to rebuke the British press for its hysterical optimism. "The Italians," he explained, "will walk over the Greeks. They will be in Athens in a fortnight."

When in the next year the Germans threatened Greece, Tranbury, by then a high official in the Ministry of Information, explained that the Greeks could not possibly resist the Germans. On the other hand, if Bulgaria came in on the Axis side, the Turks had promised to come in on our side, and this was important because "Johnny Turk is a man of his word."

After the war he explained that the

Communists in Greece were really very mild people, and with a little tact we could easily get them on our side. "Stalin," he explained, "has promised to let Greece remain on our side of the fence, and Uncle Joe is a man of his word." Of course we must be prepared to throw the King overboard. We—he meant himself and Churchill—"of course have understood that very well from the first, but it has not been possible to say things like that so long as the war was on. The Orthodox Church," he added, "is the one stable element in Greece." It was a good wheeze making Archbishop Damaskenos Regent."

In recent years he moved back again into the Middle Eastern department. "Cyprus," Tranbury explained at the beginning of this year, "is essential as a base if we are to hold our position in the Middle East. Self-determination is all very well, but one cannot apply it everywhere. Besides it is the Turks who are the reliable people." We must never forget that they were the only people in that part of the world who managed to keep out of the war. The Turks were too level-headed to have any illusions about the Russian menace. "It is the Orthodox Church which is the great disruptive force in Greece. Their archbishops interfere too much."

"It's absurd going on like this about Communism," he explained a few months later. "We have got to find a *modus vivendi*."

For forty years the Foreign Office has had the advantage, whenever he was sober, of Tranbury's expert advice on Near and Middle Eastern problems. But the most expert among us is not infallible. Last week he filled in a form on the wrong side of the paper for which he was "severely reprimanded." As a result he has fled the country. It is reported that he has gone behind the Iron Curtain and has been given a responsible post in the Russian Foreign Office. It is earnestly to be hoped that the report is true, because if the Russians are going to believe what that old fool tells them as secrets, and to act on his advice, that is the very best news that we have had since the war. A Tranbury on the Russian side is worth more than a hydrogen bomb to us.



"That's right. Get me into trouble with the Russians . . ."





# Masters of Improvisation

By TOM GIRTIN

"*AUTO-DA-FE*," our 15-year-old Toppolino, came to a roaring halt half-way up a slight incline between Sorrento and Castellamare. I am not mechanically-minded, but a sickening familiarity with the symptoms told me that the cylinder-head gasket had blown again.

"Now what do we do?" said my wife rhetorically.

"The Italian mechanic is a master of improvisation," I reminded her, quoting reassuringly from our guide-book. She said nothing, merely gazing down the road where it stretched, deserted and shimmering in the heat, into the distance. I followed her train of thought.

After about a quarter of an hour the solitary telephone wire that led me to the nearest village disappeared into the palm-shaded garden of the Grande Albergo Pensione Paradiso. The season had not yet begun: the Paradiso stood shuttered and closed. In answer to my frenzied peals upon the wrought-iron bell-pull at the garden gate a small female child eventually appeared at the distant end of the white gravel path.

She eyed me, through the bars, unblinkingly. "MA-ma!" she screamed.

An elderly woman, wiping her hands upon her thighs, came out of the house, looked at me crossly and went off to fetch the keys. By the time she reappeared, out of breath and profusely perspiring, I was uneasily certain that a bald request to use the telephone would be ill-received: an Oriental cunning and obliquity of approach was clearly called for. I asked for a vermouth and soda.

You could see her wondering why I had chosen the closed Pensione for my drinking when, a hundred metres down the road, the Café-Bar del Commercio was open.

"PA-pa!" she bellowed.

From among the olive trees, far away upon the distant hillside, across the ravine, there came a faint answering cry and I had about ten minutes in which to reflect upon the enormity of my behaviour before the proprietor of the Paradiso appeared, climbing slowly out of the ravine in the great heat. Muttering, he disappeared past me into the house. I could hear him calling out for his keys and knocking something over—

it sounded like a table covered with potted plants—in his search.

Eventually he re-emerged with a tray upon which he carried with care a very small glass of neat vermouth. The three of them stood round me, gazing in silence while I stood in their midst sipping my drink with much smacking of my lips and exclamations of approval.

At last the moment seemed opportune. Was it possible? The telephone? Silently they pointed to the telephone wire which, immediately inside their wall, turned abruptly away from them into the building next door. This, I was amazed to notice for the first time, was the post office. I thanked them and turned to go. "The signor hasn't paid," piped the little girl, and her father added: "130 lire."

There are some moments one would prefer to forget. The realization that I had nothing smaller than a 5000-lire note is one of them.

Hours, or so it seemed, later the post-master and his family, roused with difficulty from their siesta, had opened up the post office and were gathered round me gravely considering my half-dozen



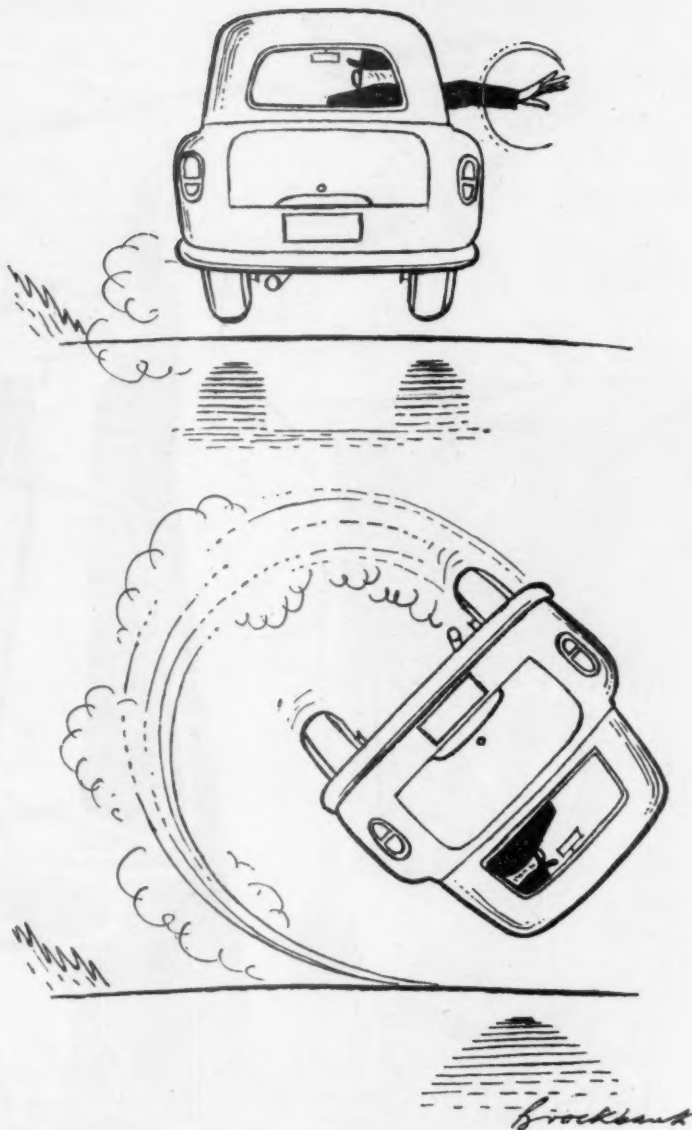
words of Italian. The telephone—a garage—my machine. What, they asked, was the matter with my machine? My vocabulary exhausted, there was nothing left to do but to break into a wild mime of a car blowing a gasket. The women withdrew shepherding the children in front of them.

"*J'ai sifflé une gasquette!*" I cried. "*Mein Gaskett ist kaput!*" On the back of an envelope I even tried to draw a gasket.

The postmaster went to the 'phone. His son insisted on my having a glass of home-made liqueur of such nauseating flavour and hair-raising strength that it would have been an implied criticism to refuse a second. I was quite enjoying the third glass when the postmaster returned. A mechanic would arrive—he consulted a time-table—in an hour and a half on the Rapido from Sorrento. In the meantime another glass . . . Suddenly I remembered my wife, alone by the roadside.

By the time the mechanic arrived quite a large crowd of interested spectators had materialized out of the deserted countryside. They stood discussing our plight in low tones. Two of them, overcome by wine and the heat of the day, leaned over the car grinning in an amiable but vacant trance through the sunshine roof. Seated in the car we tried to show a British unconcern, but the pretence was beginning to wear a little thin.

As the mechanic laid down his large black umbrella and unrolled his tool-kit it became apparent that there had been a failure in communication: my mime had been imperfectly translated. Fully armed to cope with an electrical fault, the mechanic had brought with him no tools for fitting the spare gasket that I habitually carried. This, however, proved a minor inconvenience. In a matter of minutes he had held up a youth carrying his mother side-saddle on a motor scooter, had commandeered a tool-kit, constructed from petrol-soaked rags a fire by the roadside to dry out the sparking plugs and eased the gasket into place. Grease for sealing the joint was now all that was wanting. The mechanic made an impassioned appeal to the crowd. A young man stepped forward: "*Momentino!*" he cried and, leaping on to his bicycle, he hurtled away into the distance. In the hot sun the crowd waited expectantly.



The drunks, except for an occasional eruption, were silent. A group of children happily plied the fire with twigs and bracken. The youth and his mother—she fanning herself energetically with her white gloves—sat patiently on their scooter. At last, bent low over his drop handlebars, the cyclist came flying back down the road. Amidst applause he curvetted to a halt. "*Viva Coppi!*" cried someone. The young man flushed with pleasure and produced from his pocket a small tin of ointment. The mechanic looked at it

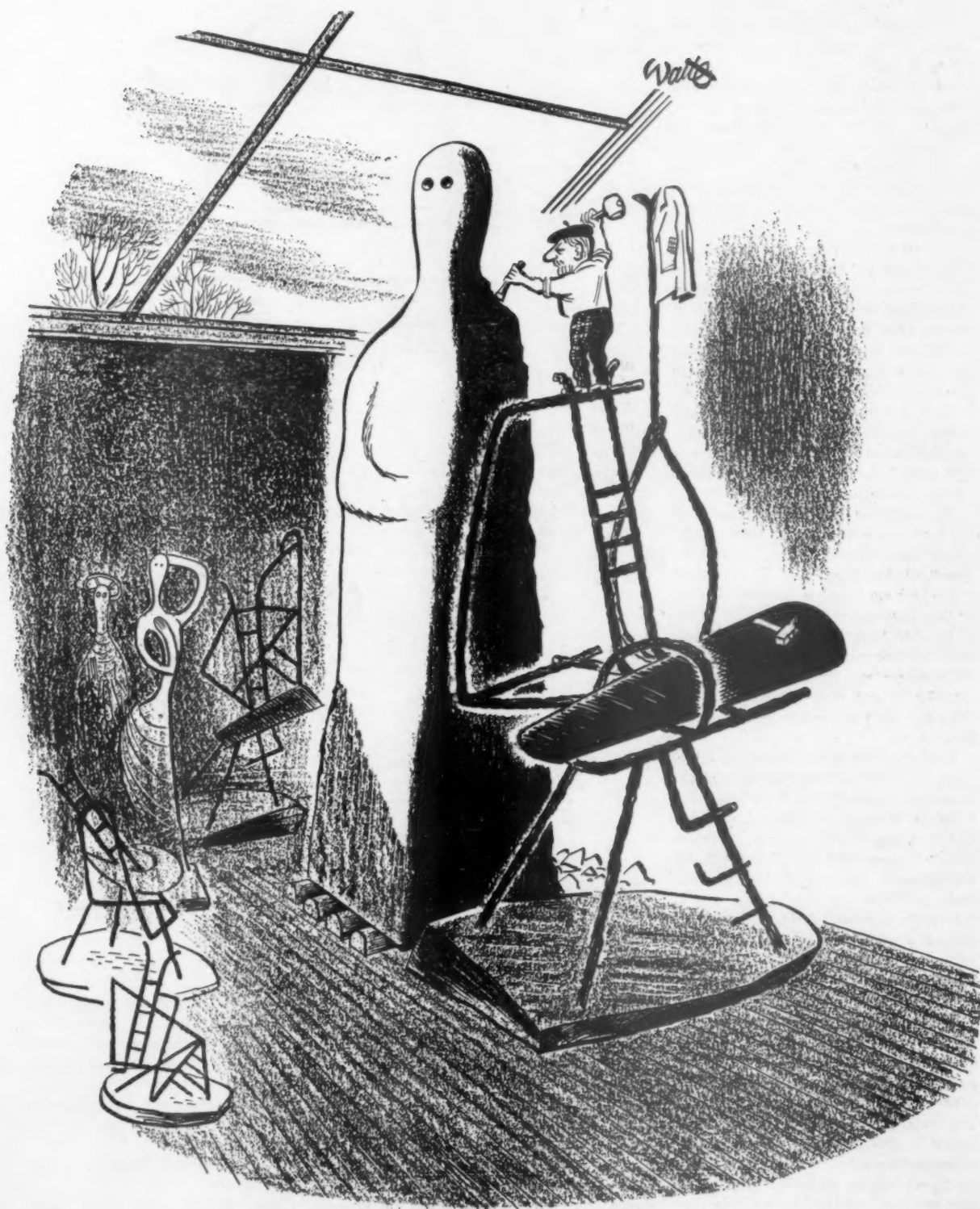
doubtfully. It bore the word "EMERRÒIDI."

"It's good," urged the young man, "I use it on my bicycle." As we drove away, the drunks dislodged and the last of the panting crowd who had pushed us dropping behind, we could see behind us the flames from the fire beginning to spread slowly across the parched hillside.

"Masters of improvisation," I was thinking aloud.

"I think you did pretty well," said my wife loyally.





# Mechanized Leprechauns

By CLAUD COCKBURN

THERE was a shipwreck somewhere, the radio said—vessel breaking up fast on storm-beaten rocks off Wales or Brittany, but you couldn't hear just where because the car was bouncing like a hiccuping flea across one of Munster's great spaces, open except for rocks jutting up from under the turf.

"Great, just great," murmured Mr. J. J. Crowley, for it was he who swayed and bounced beside me in the back seat, his ear cocked to the radio, his bright, doggy eyes swimming with pleasure.

"Great?"

"Imagine now if we had one of these big aerial cameras, infra-red rays and all the flaming rest of it. Get over there and take aerial pictures of the whole flaming thing. Waves, desperate rescues and all the rest of it. Sell that to the newspapers, could we not?"

The third passenger in the car, who had come to see how Mr. Crowley's barley was coming along, said he believed for that sort of work you needed a special kind of plane. "Are any of your planes the right type?" Mr. Crowley looked at him with frowning disfavour, his small black moustache jutting horizontally. Evidently this other was a spoil-sport, a man such as will discourage another man who wants to buy a £500 camera from so doing.

"Listen to me now," he said huffily, "if we buy that camera we'll buy the right class of plane to put it in, you may be sure."

We got out and walked across acres of barley so extensive that you had the feeling they might extend all the way from here to the Guinness works. While Mr. Crowley and the agricultural expert dipped their hands into one after another of the serried sacks of barley, rubbing, smelling and chewing the grain, Mr. Crowley seemed to be absent-mindedly murmuring of a plan for buying a printing press which had taken his fancy and then maybe buying a newspaper so as to have something to print on the flaming thing.

"What that man is," the agricultural expert confided to me, "is a mechanized leprechaun."

Which could cure the headaches of the men at the Tourist Board who never know for certain whether colleens and

bee-loudness or constant hot water and the new Diesel trains are the more appealing symbols of Ireland To-day. If the leprechauns are getting mechanized, where's the contradiction or difficulty? Also the result of this process is reassuring for the sort of people who complain that modern life, the Welfare State and such are obliterating individuality, producing a dead level, making existence humdrum. Particularly when the most advanced types of mechanized leprechaun feel attracted, as they immediately have, by what is currently about the least humdrum form of business activity, namely the business of organizing charter aeroplanes to run frequently improbable-seeming cargoes from anywhere to anywhere at almost no notice.

Mr. Crowley got into the business the easy way—he liked flying and he liked speculating, and he had made enough money out of cattle-dealing and kindred enterprises to indulge both his fancies. He originally joined a flying club to get the use of a plane and an instructor. But somehow there were difficulties, and a situation seems to have developed where Mr. Crowley had to buy a plane for the Club to keep it going and himself take on the job of instructor. It was said that a novice flying with Mr. Crowley had at least the satisfaction of knowing that nothing more alarming was ever likely to happen to him afterwards.

The air charter business seemed to measure up to his requirements by being, at that time, about the chanciest kind of gamble in reach. Also he read



"The message reads: 'O.K. for food—drop cathode tube.'"



"Which month was yours the book of?"

Mr. Nevil Shute's novel *Round the Bend* where the man buys a plane on a shoe-string and has a lot of excitement and makes a bundle of money running a charter air company in the orient. He bought a plane and was ready to start operations. After some time it became apparent that there was no trade to be done. Irish merchants seemed uninterested in paying a little extra to shift their goods a lot faster. Mr. Crowley's response to this discouraging situation was simply to buy another plane, his temperament being such that he lives in the happy and almost mystical conviction that if he buys any gadget he thinks he wants, something will turn up later to make it pay.

Just as everyone was saying what a fool he was he landed a contract flying the Dublin and English newspapers daily to Shannon for distribution in the south and west. This continued monotonously enough for some months, until the plane, which had been parked

with characteristic casualness on an exposed part of the airfield, had its tail blown off by an unexpected gale.

One has the impression that the occurrence was not entirely unwelcome—things were tending to the humdrum. By hindsight, too, Mr. Crowley points out that in any case the enterprise was going to pot because the introduction of the new fast trains between Dublin and Cork had made newspaper distribution by air uneconomic.

The only visible source of business having thus disappeared with the Diesels, Mr. Crowley immediately bought two new aeroplanes, hired a brilliantly knowledgeable ex-R.A.F. pilot whom he had met working as a barman in a Piccadilly pub, rented an expensive office at Shannon airport, and in his farmhouse in Shanballymore beside the Boggeragh mountains waited cheerfully for something to turn up for the planes, and the pilot, and the office to do.

What actually did turn up was the formidable figure of a Mr. Donald MacDonald, who combined an audacity equalling Mr. Crowley's with a tidy business mind and a capacity for hard-driving organization. Mr. MacDonald has run his life to date in strict accord with the late G. B. Shaw's advice to "get what you like or you'll grow to like what you get." Born into the circus business, he decided early that it was not what he liked—he declares it to be boring. Turning his back on the caravans and the big top, he went to Trinity College, Dublin, and thence into the British Colonial Service, where he presently became Assistant District Commissioner of a bigish chunk of the interior of Sierra Leone. It seems an oddish job for a militantly Irish Irishman, an eager gourmet, with a passion for conversation and gay company. However, he did it well, and the Colonial Office was sad when he decided to quit.

Asked why, he says—as though the fact had been a big surprise to him—that there were so few people to talk to in the evenings there in that African jungle. Apparently the conversation of the native chiefs did not compensate for the rattle of Davy Byrnes' Dublin bar. Retired thus, at the age of thirty-one, he took to farming in Ireland, found he had a lot of surplus energy, organized a publishing company, took on a spare time job as trouble-shooter for Irish show business, and last year, after taking a look at Mr. Crowley's aerial organization, decided it was just what the doctor ordered.

Incorporated as Republic Air Charters, the company was thinking haphazardly of doing some sort of trade with the Continent, and was sending out letters to various merchants listing its proposed charges. Unfortunately the employee to whom this humdrum task had been entrusted thought that because a kilometre is five-eighths of a mile, a kilogram must be five eighths of a pound, and the weight and mileage charges had been worked out on that basis. It was probably the cheapest offer in the history of freight, and could have ruined the company in about a week if anyone had taken advantage of it before Mr. MacDonald moved in and put an end to all that kind of thing.

Ratiocinating vigorously, Mr. MacDonald came up with the axiom that



although there are a hundred types of goods that someone, some time, might want to send by air rather than another way, the sure-fire basis of air chartering is to find something which, besides being badly wanted, has a very high rate of deterioration. And in next to no time he was thinking night and day about lobsters. He admits that, apart from the logic of the thing, he likes to think about lobsters anyway. As a man who takes gastronomy seriously, he found inspiration in the thought that he was going to help bring better, fresher lobsters from the Atlantic shores of Ireland to the tables of fellow *gourmets* in Paris, Amsterdam, Bonn and Berne.

Continental lobster-lovers were living, he found, in a state of constant apprehension and frequent frustration when the supplies from Brittany and Portugal and Ireland ran out or arrived in condition far from the pink. Some people called Mieras, at Yerserke in South Holland, had actually tried flying lobsters in from Australia, with unhappy results because the creatures, despite their patent ice-bags, died *en route*. The telegraph and telephone lines in seemingly out-of-this-world Irish fishing villages vibrated with anxious appeals from places as far away as Munich and Milan.

Mr. MacDonald dashed up and down the west coast lining up supplies, reorganized the Company's mixed bag of planes ranging from tiny Tiger Moths to twin-engined de Havilland Rapides, bought uniform freight-carrying ex-R.A.F. Ansons at £3,000 apiece, and started air-lifting lobsters by the ton from the rocks of Kerry to the biggest fishmarket in the world at Ostend.

The things that a lot of people want in a tearing hurry are varied and surprising. The largest charter Air Company in the world—U.S. Seaboard and Western Air—got its start mainly because crews of scheduled airlines refused to carry live monkeys from here and there to American laboratories. They claimed the monkeys made them smell and got them "shunned," they said in their complaint, by their fellow men. Seaboard took on the job, and this monkey business led to almost every other kind of business you can think of.

Looking for return freight after the

lobsters had been delivered, Mr. MacDonald found that every summer week-end one hundred and fifty trains of thirty cars each roll across the French frontier from Holland and Belgium full of absolutely nothing else but carrier pigeons bound, mostly, for Bourges where they are released for the race back to the Low Countries. Recently, keen pigeon-men have been awakened to the idea that their pigeons would probably start the race in better condition if they had a nicer journey to the starting point—in a chartered plane.

Panicking contractors who see time limits looming are another comfort to the air charterers. Only the other day a man who had a big contract fitting up a new hospital in Galway realized that unless he hired a plane to rush to Dusseldorf and load up with some steel fittings he wanted he was liable to be sunk. He was a conscientious man, and in the interests of the hospital he hired a Republic plane, spent half a day in Dusseldorf personally supervising the loading, and was back in Dublin the same evening. The only thing that went wrong was that it took three days and nights to haul the stuff overland from Dublin to Galway.

Nowadays Mr. MacDonald sends through the air of Ireland, England and the Continent everything from snails to leather goods and steel parts of machinery which, the importers claim, corrode slightly when exposed for long to sea breezes. The snails are in a hurry because, at the proper season, hard-working men have been busy first artificially nauseating them to clear their stomachs, then fattening them with red wine and flour, and after that they must be hastened to the table.

Though non-edible goods are profitable too, it is plain to see that what still truly enchants Mr. MacDonald is the thought of all those lovely cheeses, all the early asparagus and strawberries, all the *primeurs* of more southerly lands winging towards London and Dublin. As for Mr. Crowley, one feels that everything is ticking over rather charmlessly for him. When he heard, the other day, that the Company had been offered a long-term contract to fly the continental editions of *Time* and *Life* magazines from Paris regularly, week after week, to Dublin he felt that, in spite of all his efforts to avoid it, the humdrum was definitely closing in on him again.



"... he gets cramp."

SIGNI.



*Yours in haste ...*



*Yours faithfully*



*Ever yours*



*Your loving son ...*

OFF



*Cordially yours*



*Yours sincerely*



*Your most obedient servant*



*Ronald Searle*

*Yours tell the cows come home ...*

# Non-Scientist

By R. G. G. PRICE

MODERN educational thought is shouting loudly these days that Science students should be given as much as two glimpses a week of the cultural inheritance preserved on the Classical side. It is shouting even louder that non-Science students ought to be spending a full third of their time learning to be grateful to scientists. After all, the Classical side may lead to the Treasury and opportunities for expressing gratitude in terms of salaries, pensions and working hours. In my day, however, Science was not like that at all.

When I first met Science I was so young that it was called Nature Study. The master who took it was nothing if not systematic and dealt with the forms of life strictly in ascending order of size. He brought microscopes and in turn we looked down them; it was a leisurely lesson. I suppose the thrills of magnification soon wore off because I cannot remember more than the first two creatures—Amœba and Vorticelli. I do not think we ever reached any animal or plant that was visible to the naked eye.

When serious education began, Science was a couple of breaks a week inserted in the time-table to give our

Form Masters time to correct the Latin sentences which were our main work. It usually took the form of water boiling. Well, it made a change to get out of our desks and be able to wander about and to drop weights on thermometers while the calorimeters steamed and the bunsens had their versatility tested to the full; but the narrow range of our laboratory activities palled. More and more our water boiling ended in sums. We resented their intrusion into an essentially recreative period. I think the course for non-scientists must have been the early weeks of the Science side course and that perhaps some elaborate sub-structure was being laid for the Advanced Study of Heat. Sometimes the lesson was enlivened by an outburst from the wild Swiss who usually took us. He wore varying amounts of hair and had a past that, from his account, was rich in improbabilities. However, in time my growing mastery of Greek and Latin grammar slowly floated me up to the Upper Fourth, where one changed from water boiling to Chemistry. Here, again, the initial stages of the full course were stretched out thin over several terms.

The prospect of Chemistry sounded

pure delight, with fireworks and poisons and colour changes. Unfortunately we began our chemical education with a serious young man who was even keener on dragging in arithmetic than the physicists. He expected us to work out little sums about hydrogen instead of simply lighting it. However, he was not a very firm young man and we soon slid into the lazy habit of mixing a pinch of every chemical in sight and then, for old times' sake, boiling it. Soon we were too near to School Certificate to permit periods being diverted from the Classics and I never had a Science lesson again. I left school thinking science was a slightly contemptible method of giving us the kind of therapeutic time-wasting that heavy mental effort needed. In a girls' school, I felt, it might take the form of raffia work.

Had I been clever and industrious I might have ended up administering scientists, my Minutes being strongly influenced by these early experiences. As it was, I went into teaching and one of the very first things I taught was not only science but the branch of it in which I had specialized for so long. Intending teachers were tried out by being shoved into a toughish school for three weeks before the post-graduate course began. My ability to teach History to boys of sixteen was tested out on such jobs as taking a class of fifty boys I had never met before down a spiral staircase in silence. (I also had to drill an enormous number of boys on the roof of a tall school in Walworth. To get things started I blew my whistle and in a flash they were over the coping and out of sight.) One day the teacher to whom I was attached for this preliminary period, tired of seeing me sitting about trying to make notes on his methods, suggested I should get things ready for the next lesson while he was taking Divinity. The monitor who had been seconded to me went off to get the experiment and returned with a flask of water, a retort-stand and wire-gauze, a bunsen, a thermometer, a two-holed cork, a length of glass tubing and some stamp-paper. As there was no laboratory, the staff had to get apparatus from some central store and fit it up in their classrooms.

The monitor told me that the tube







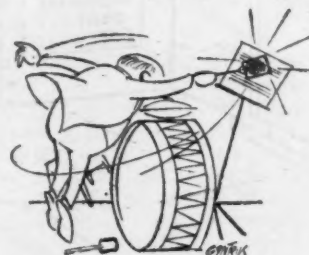
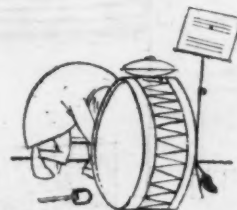
should be covered with stamp-paper, and inserted in one hole while the thermometer went in the other. The bunsen was lighted, the water began to heat up and I was glad to notice obvious signs of approval from the class, who looked up eagerly from *Exodus*. Apparently this experiment was an old favourite and I only hoped I should perform it as well as they were used to having it performed. Soon some hot water shot out of the top of the tube. It was messy but I supposed it was some kind of safety precaution insisted on by the L.C.C. The unfortunate man in charge of me looked round irritably and said I should have to begin all over again. He said there was too much stamp-paper on the tube. Only half the circumference should be covered. He and the monitor between them then explained that I was supposed to keep a note of where the water had got to at different temperatures, measure how many centimetres this was up the tube and then somehow incorporate all these figures in a graph. As the Divinity lesson drew to a close I should smoothly produce my results to provide a firm foundation for a lesson on the formula for finding the co-efficient of expansion. For the rest of the Divinity lesson my attempts to scrape off enough stamp-paper but not too much, my attempt to cool the water in the flask by pouring cold water on the hot glass and the fact that the water in the new flask expanded faster than I could write kept the class enthralled.

When I actually got on to the strength of a school, and one that believed in Subject Masters rather than the all-round Form Masters, I imagined that Science was now no longer a threat; but it cannot be too well known to intending schoolmasters that no threat is ever more than dormant in Education. When colleagues are away you may find yourself teaching, or at least invigilating, anything. In my early days I once had

to take a Science set of four very senior and advanced boys. I turned up with some exercise-books to correct and they took no notice of me at all. Very earnestly and efficiently they began constructing a vast machine in the middle of the laboratory. I hoped it was Physics because at levels below atomic fission Physics seemed unlikely to attract attention; they looked too advanced, I felt, to be doing Sound. Then they began pouring chemicals in.

I felt that I ought to give some tactful tug on the reins so, pretending to be tired of bending over my work, I stretched and casually strolled over and asked bluffly what it was all about. If I had been Richard Dimbleby they would have replied with a stream of lucid technicalities and obvious enjoyment. As it was, they looked very surprised and a boy who smelled of the dregs of several scent bottles said it was Chemical Engineering and then mentioned some foreign names rather fast. I told them to carry on and another boy said, "Oh, you'll take responsibility, will you, sir?" with an air of commending courage in an unexpected place. He then turned a switch and electricity rushed about the experiment, in which all the different liquids seethed and got into each other's compartments and sparks jumped about in gases and several parts of it got very hot.

I watched under lowered lids, in case I was left behind in some sudden rush for safety. The boys did nothing. They lounged about as their creation shook and crackled and fizzed. They yawned. They took out a cross-word puzzle. One boy began to draw an apparatus; but when I looked at it the next time it was unmistakably a girl. The bell for the end-of the period went. I was due the other side of the school, but I did not like to leave them without some comment. I really wanted to ask whether it was safe to leave them. This would obviously be too frank an

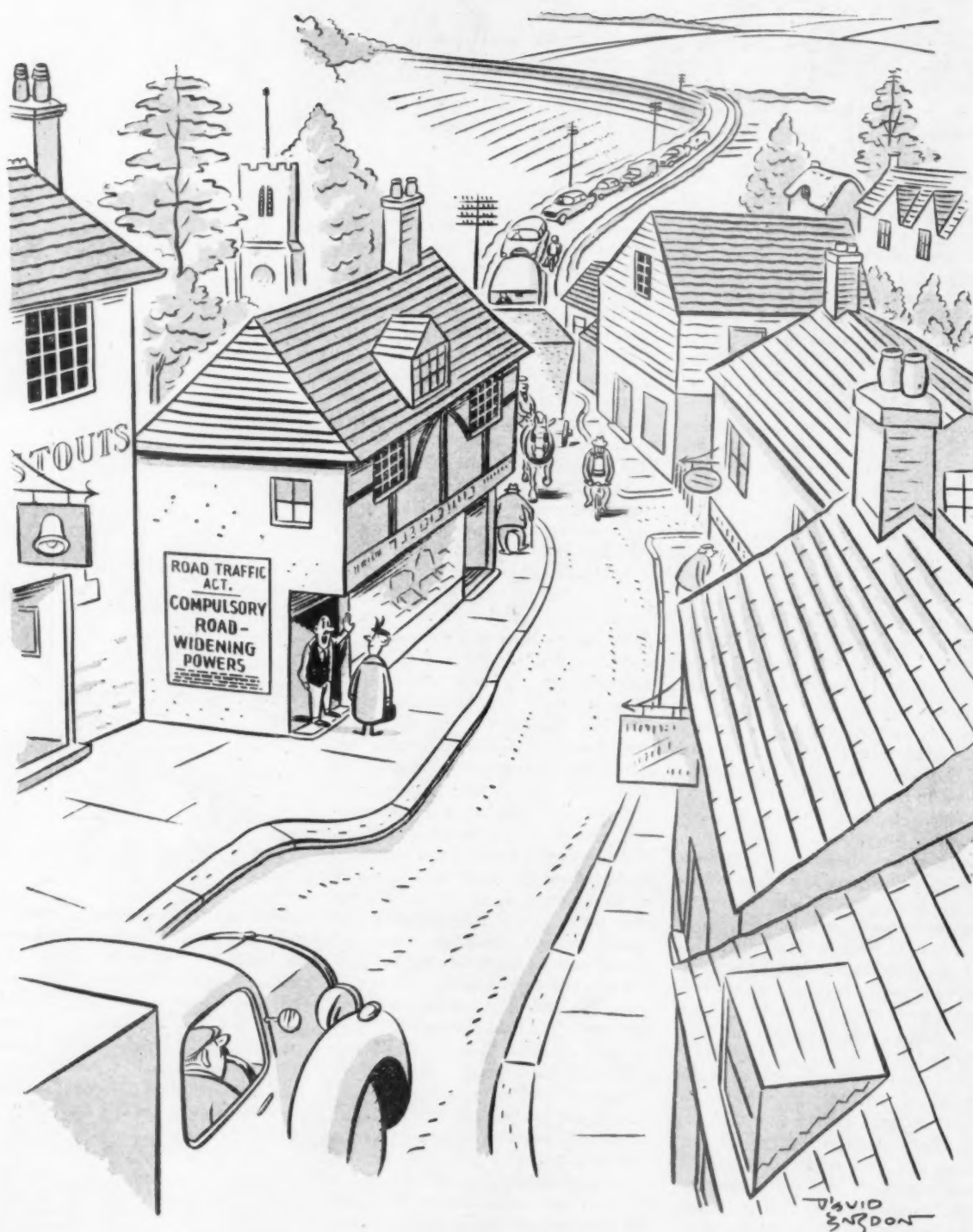


admission of incompetence. I could not think of a joke. It seemed a little banal to say that I had to be going. The strain of watching this obviously expensive process for about twenty minutes made me lose my head. Clumsily gathering my exercise-books I said "Well, don't blow yourselves up." "Is that an order?" asked a boy with yellow socks in a freezing tone.

2 2

"Hearing a noise, Mr. Bridgens and Mr. Fletcher went from the bar into the room and saw a saw crouching in front of a cupboard which contained money and cigarettes."

*The Birmingham Express and Star*  
Teeth bared?



"And watch out for our 'Everything Must Go' sale some time in 1975."



## In the City



### In Them Thar Hills

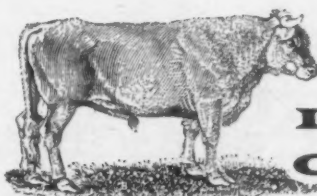
**I**N the heart of every speculator there beats a rage to live, and to live means to take risks. When the markets are closed he amuses himself with Russian roulette and similar pastimes; when the markets are dull he buys and sells simultaneously just to keep his hand in; when they are stagnant he is apt to dabble in alchemy.

The recent excitement in Kaffirs cannot be explained in terms of market intelligence. There was nothing in the latest reports from the mines to justify a wave of optimism, no dramatic bore-hole strikes, no revolution in mining methods, no improvement in the supply of labour. Scratching about for copy certain City scribes have suggested that the boomlet began with rumours of approaching devaluation, but with my ear pressed hard to the ground I found the whispering quite inaudible. Hope springs eternal among operators in gold shares that the sterling devaluation of 1949 (when the price per fine ounce jumped from 172s. 3d. to 248s.) will be repeated, but they are not always crazy enough to believe that summit talks between British and American statesmen presage new days of bounty. The private investor should leave Kaffirs to the speculators, though he need not deprive himself of the fun of accepting their bar-room sweeteners, listening to their hot tips and their bewildering analyses of the economic situation.

There has been some renewal of interest in the affairs of the Orange Free State goldfield, a strip of territory, thirty-five miles by ten, which has been developed since the war, produces gold in unprofitable quantity and rumours of uranium in profusion. The dozen or so mines in this belt, from Allanridge in the north, through Odendaalsrus and Welkom to Virginia in the south, have had something like £200 millions pumped into them during the last ten years—a remarkable example of economic inanity on the grand scale. Any gold disinterred—at enormous expense and with a prodigious expenditure of skill, toil and sweat—is promptly reburied deep in the vaults of Fort Knox, Kentucky, and guarded by a garrison of

one thousand men. Some day the precious metal will be dethroned and the myth of its aristocracy exploded, and then man will be able to calculate how much unproductive labour has been expended in its cause.

Mining in the O.F.S. has been handicapped by rising costs, the shortage of skilled labour, the vast amount of salt water encountered in the workings and (in some instances) inadequate initial planning. Of the quoted companies those with the brightest prospects



## In the Country



### Home-Grown Sugar

**C**OUNTRYMEN hibernating in the recesses of Wiltshire and Cornwall have little reason to be grateful to Cook or Columbus, but we are distinctly beholden to the man who discovered that it is possible for a farmer to attend an agricultural conference on the Continent and charge his expenses against his business profits. This has more than doubled the size of our world, and perhaps explains why Pig Societies can meet in Mentone and Horse Societies forgather along the Riviera. Thanks to this happy loophole, a neighbour of mine has recently been visiting the agricultural Research Station in Galicia, and I think he has returned with a plant discovery as valuable as Sir Walter Raleigh's.

It appears that the Spaniards have bred a kind of sugar-cane which can resist northern climates, and although this has a very low sugar content and is of no use for producing syrup, it yields up to eighty tons of greenstuff per acre and has a higher sugar content than any crop which we have previously grown in England. The implications

seem to me to be Welkom (profits indicate that the worst of its teething troubles are over), Free State Geduld, St. Helena, Virginia and Merriespruit. Freddie's Consolidated, on the other hand, is still up against it and losing money at the rate of half a million a year. I should add that there is little hope of any of these mines becoming dividend payers in the near future.

\* \* \* \* \*

The returns from the Imperial Tobacco Company show that the British public is still largely undisturbed by medical hoodoos on the "pernicious weed," and that the elaborate packaging of rival brands has so far been unable to undermine the Players empire. Profits are higher (£23 millions), dividends remain unaltered, and ordinary stock units, yielding nearly seven per cent at current prices, are still a very sound investment. It's the "Imps" that count.

MAMMON

are obvious to any farmer. Here is the ideal crop for silage. The method of planting is to lay the cane in a shallow trench about three inches deep during the late spring. It can be cut with a strong mower and picked up by green crop loader. It should of course be cut up before placing in the silo. The Spaniards add a little lime to every load, but of course this crop needs no molasses. Such silage is extremely high in protein.

Personally, I am inclined to doubt whether this new breed of sugar cane is capable of resisting the very low temperatures that we can get in this country, but even so I see no reason why it should not be grown here providing the farmer takes the precaution of covering the cane with dung or straw which would protect it effectively from frost.

At any rate it is an experiment worth pursuing. There seems to be no likelihood of the cost of cattle cake being reduced. It is now approximately £37 per ton, and constitutes about 75 per cent of the dairy farmer's costs. Another point in favour of the new crop is that it has to be planted only once in seven years.

RONALD DUNCAN





## BOOKING OFFICE

### Lorenzo the Critical

**D. H. Lawrence:** Selected Literary Criticism. Edited by Anthony Beal. Heinemann, 21/-

**T**HIS book was very well worth compiling, and its editor, Mr. Anthony Beal, is to be congratulated. It collects together over four hundred pages of D. H. Lawrence's literary criticism, thereby forming a fairly coherent picture of what he thought about books and writers. I say "fairly" because, although it is not difficult to grasp what Lawrence did *not* like in life and letters, to agree about what he *did* like is not so easy. Two points, however, emerge with some clarity: the first, that he was a very "clever" man—a writer with a really powerful brain. This is sometimes forgotten in the atmosphere of conflict and confusion that thrives round his name. The second point is that his whole approach seems largely inappropriate to the world of literature.

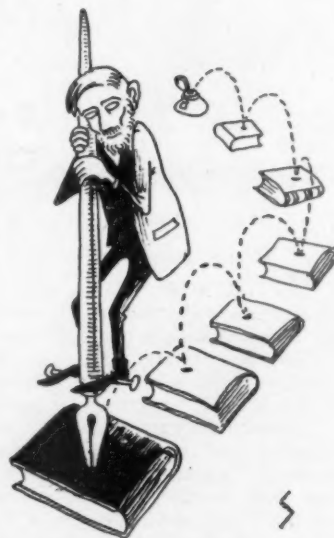
Lawrence was a frustrated politician or preacher. He wanted power: to force people to do his will. He was temperamentally unable to understand that different people by their nature may require to live different lives; and, accordingly, to find their expression in different forms of art. Everyone must be crammed into the Procrustean, or rather Laurentian, bed: stretched out or lopped off.

It must be admitted that this method produces some amusing results, and a great deal of enjoyable vituperation. Lawrence regarded himself as essentially in revolt against such nineteenth-century writers as Flaubert, Ibsen and Thomas Hardy, "the intellectual, hopeless people"; and also, on the whole, against the Russian nineteenth-century writers about whom he has interesting things to say, especially Dostoevsky, "like the rat, slithering along in hate, in the shadows, and, in order to belong to the light, professing love, all love."

Rather unexpectedly he likes Petronius. With reservations, he is well

disposed to Herman Melville; *In Our Time* by Mr. Ernest Hemingway receives some praise: and—in a moment of reviewing for *Vogue*—Lawrence enjoyed *The Station* by Robert Byron. But on the whole he is found in attack: attacks which, at their worst, are like endless and infinitely egotistical sermons.

The truth was that Lawrence's personal conceit and also, one cannot help feeling, his envy were both unrestrained. By this I do not of course



mean that proper reliance on self that must be the ultimate basis of all art. I mean the rage that possesses Lawrence when he comes in contact with any writer, or indeed any person, who might be thought in competition with himself. Totally without humour (a rarity among English novelists) he also lacks the self-control necessary to a critic of the first rank; but this does not prevent much of his criticism from being acute and stimulating.

Perhaps the best section of this volume is that containing his *Studies in Classic American Literature*. Here the violence of Lawrence's manner seems to

fit the subject in hand. He is very fond of using the method (by which any book on earth can be made to sound silly) of recounting the plot in his own contemptuous words; but, when dealing with Fenimore Cooper or Poe or Whitman, a less knockabout approach might also have been less effective.

To read through this book is to be made painfully aware of the ups and downs of Lawrence's own health. From a clear statement of his critical point of view, when writing at his best, he will suddenly descend into a morass of apocalyptic denunciation (e.g. latter part of *Study of Thomas Hardy*) literally impossible to understand, while some of the passages that seek to describe, say, the behaviour of woman ("the Female Principle") when their obscurity is unravelled strike one as of very doubtful psychological value.

Lawrence represents a form of neo-Romanticism perhaps not so very different from that of many of his contemporaries against whom he felt himself so strongly in opposition—the old Bloomsbury doctrine that if you feel it you really ought to do it. He is often seen at his best when attacking behaviour of which he might be expected to approve, e.g. Bosinney and Irene in *The Forsyte Saga* ("the whole thing is doggy to a degree"); but there were no doubt simple-minded readers of Galsworthy and Lawrence who supposed that Bosinney and Irene were doing just what Lawrence recommended.

Lawrence was perhaps in a way too gifted; or at least too lacking in self-discipline to control his gifts to their best advantage. Leaning heavily towards the state of being primarily a poet, he was chiefly, as it turned out, concerned with writing novels. As a novelist, with all his force, he is never wholly at ease with the medium. He himself is the only character who ever truly emerges. The style is often facetious and uneven. His short stories, where extended play of character is not required, are often more effective. He is perhaps best of all in his remarkable descriptive passages like the evocative Australian opening of



**Kangaroo.** He is a strange, uncomfortable figure, and this book helps to understand him. ANTHONY POWELL

**Reminiscences:** The Marchioness Curzon of Kedleston. Hutchinson, 21/-

In telling the story of her life Lady Curzon, not unnaturally, finds most to say when she describes the brilliant years at Hackwood and Carlton House Terrace. Before her marriage to Lord Curzon in 1916 she had led a gay and pleasant social life in London and the Argentine, but by marrying a member of the inner War Cabinet, shortly afterwards Foreign Secretary, this beautiful daughter of an American diplomatist found far wider opportunities to use her gifts as a hostess. She seized these opportunities with both hands and she did not limit herself to strictly official entertainments. On one occasion, at what she admits to have been a mice-will-play party, her guests were startled by the unexpected appearance of Lord Curzon wearing his orders. There was relief when this turned out to be Captain (now Sir Malcolm) Bullock, skilfully disguised.

She shared not only Lord Curzon's political life, which culminated in disappointment, but also his passion for restoring Bodiam and Montacute, his most enduring monuments. The political footnotes are of great assistance and the many photographs are of enthralling interest.

V. G. P.

**The Haunting of Borley Rectory.** Eric J. Dingwall, Kathleen M. Goldney and Trevor H. Hill. Duckworth, 16/-

The three authors were appointed by the Society for Psychical Research to investigate the "paranormal" phenomena at Borley which the late Harry Price described in *The Most Haunted House in England* and *The End of Borley Rectory*. It is sad to record that they have concluded that the Rectory was not haunted at all; most of the phenomena were probably the work of Price himself and of Mrs. Foyster, the wife of one of the incumbents. It was most likely Mrs. Foyster who produced the pencil messages on the wall supposed to have been written by the spirit of a walled-up nun. The account of their investigation is absorbingly interesting and often amusing; but a ghost story that is explained away at the end is always rather a disappointment. May we hope that Harry Price, possibly through the medium of the ouija board, will now come back with *The Return of Borley Rectory*?

B. A. Y.

**French Leave.** P. G. Wodehouse. Jenkins, 10/6

"In the course of a chequered career" the astute and impecunious Nicolas Jules St. Xavier Auguste, Marquis de Maufringneuse et Valerie-Moberanne (alias Old Nick) had "frequently been guilty of actions which would have caused a

three-card-trick man to purse his lips and shake his head"; yet despite this amorality—which in Mr. Wodehouse's experienced hands is never allowed to become actually cynical—we follow with sympathy and delight his progress, from a clerkship in the "Ministry de Dons et Legs" to a position, as "the head waiter to end all head waiters," in an expensive New York restaurant.

The author's usual speed, verbal economy, and mastery of the wisecrack are all abundantly displayed; the dialogue includes—besides such phonetic felicities as "journey say quar" and "Pay-Glare" (a French policeman's pronunciation of "Pegler")—the sentence "Your which which I am what?" that might make imitators of the later Jamesian style look to their laurels; while not only jaded reviewers will enjoy the American publisher's acidulous résumé of a *Tobacco Road*-type novel on page 127.

J. M.-R.

**Bagles and a Tiger.** John Masters. Michael Joseph, 16/-

Horse-play in the Mess, tried loyalties and wild tribesmen, baked plains and hard snows and tigers have always attracted the kind of reader who would like to have shared similar experience. Here is the first volume of an autobiography in which all the properties of the over-caricatured reminiscence are used superbly to illuminate history, to reveal the inside as well as the outside of a man of action and to produce a classic of English narrative prose to stand beside Mr. Masters' novels. The Imperial frontier in the 'thirties attracted disapproval rather than description. This is what it was like to train Gurkhas, to be grateful for R.A.F. help during a

punitive expedition in Waziristan or to feel oneself being moulded by regimental tradition. To make a list of the various points of interest, psychological, political, topographical, anthropological, would be unfair to the unity and drive of this extraordinary book. I may be writing too soon after reading it, but at the moment it seems to me one of the best autobiographies I have ever read.

R. G. G. P.

**The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization.**

J. Eric S. Thompson. Gollancz, 21/-

The monumental evidences of a Central American culture that knew its golden days twelve hundred years ago have been best reached from the jungle trails of chicleros tapping sapodilla trees for chewing-gum. This fine piece of irony accords well with the outlook of a people who built temples a modern architect must admire and revelled in calculations of planetary orbits, yet failed to discover the arch or the wheel. Beset by multitudinous divinities they made Your Grace My Lady Maize a charming goddess, but Venus, male and malevolent, was less attractive and all their worship was tainted with human sacrifice.

Mr. Thompson, discoverer and interpreter, considers their decline began when under Mexican influences they forsook peaceful theocracy and a pure art form for flamboyant design and militaristic ambition. To-day their gentle lovable descendants are grievously addicted to drunkenness, and chewing-gum is made from a synthetic substitute, yet granted one more turn of the heavenly cycles and we may still see Mayas ranking as world-champions at table tennis or holding their own at Lord's.

C. C. P.



"It's his poker face."



## AT THE PLAY

*The Threepenny Opera*  
(ROYAL COURT)  
*Ring for Catty* (LYRIC)

I GO to the theatre to be interested, moved, entertained; and if all three, then so much the better. I do not go to the theatre to be instructed in the elements of Marxist science or sanitary engineering, unless such instruction is so subservient to these other requirements as to come acceptably by the way. In other words, I am not prepared to be bored in order to satisfy anybody's itch to teach. This no doubt damning admission may explain why, if BERTOLT BRECHT's *The Threepenny Opera* is a fair example of his Epic theatre, it leaves me at freezing-point.

HERR BRECHT regards the stage as a rostrum for night-classes on social consciousness. "To-day," he has remarked modestly of his somewhat dated child, "when the human being must be grasped as the totality of social relationships, only the Epic form can enable the dramatist to find a comprehensive image of the world." His Epic method seeks to destroy the illusion of actuality by being as artificial as it can. "Instead of assembling on the stage real rooms, buildings and their furniture"—I quote

from Eric Bentley's book, *The Modern Theatre*—"it uses slides, charts, film projections, simultaneous scenes, and tableaux rolled across the stage on treadmills . . . The actor must not pretend to be the character. He must play the rôle from the outside."

All of which, boiled down, becomes the more pretentious tricks of the 'twenties, when *The Threepenny Opera* was written, presumably in bitterness. It takes *The Beggars' Opera* and dips it in squalor and a brash kind of vicious sentimentality; and its tone remains as obstinately adolescent as if a bunch of undergraduates had got together to demonstrate their cleverness. Its scene is Soho, where Macheath is a small-time gangster, surrounded by spivs and molls. The styles of acting are inextricably mixed, and whether this is the fault of the producer, SAM WANAMAKER, or part of BRECHT's grand concept I cannot say; but BILL OWEN plays Macheath in the tophatted manner of the music-hall, DAPHNE ANDERSON plays Polly as for musical comedy, while the rest range from burlesque so wild as to be embarrassing (The Chief of Police) to the straight realism of a seedy brothel. There is even a stage parson, exhumed from some Edwardian family charade. Macheath's escape from prison is arranged

on the flying wire of pantomime. In a handstand upstage uniformed musicians deliver, very noisily, jazz music by KURT WEILL which takes such exceptional pains to be eccentric that it gives the impression of a tired street orchestra in liquor.

The lyrics may have suffered in translation, but most of them are very poor, with the exception of a cabaret song sung exceedingly well in the brothel by MARIA REMUSAT. None of the grubby little jokes passing for humour would stifle the yawns of a third form; wit is satisfied by a few jejune cracks at capitalism. Between the scenes infant scrawls are flashed on to a screen. Intentionally sordid, the presentation succeeds admirably in its intention. Bittiness and scrappiness appear to be prime factors in the Epic plan; I dare say if our eyes and ears were not so constantly distracted there might be a grave danger of our feeling some pernicious reflection of the pleasure, and even the emotion, which poor old John Gay was reactionary enough to give us.

*Ring for Catty* is a mild little piece about a men's ward in a sanatorium. Amateurs of hospital manners may complain that the Sister—that reluctant dragon whose mood in real life colours everything—is much less in evidence than the Matron; otherwise the observation of this bed-society is good. But without a dramatic plot observation cannot make a play. The authors, PATRICK CARGILL and JACK BEALE, have wound up a number of little springs and have omitted to find a strong one in the centre. Their young cockney, dying slowly and gallantly, their amorous airman, their disgruntled miner, their shy young poet and their gay probationer, all these characters provide separate short stories that fail to generate a common tension. Within their conventional limits they are serviceably played, particularly by MARY MACKENZIE and PATRICK MCGOCHAN.

ERIC KROWN



Leonard White—PATRICK MCGOCHAN

(*Ring for Catty*)  
Nurse Catty—MARY MACKENZIE



## AT THE GALLERY

SOME FEBRUARY SHOWS

MIDDLE-aged people whose aesthetic sense was not damped down to extinction by the deadly, often shiny chocolate, reproductions of their schooldays, will generally approve of the opportunity afforded by the Pictures for Schools Exhibition (Whitechapel Art Gallery) for boys and girls to get to know the contemporary world through the eyes of contemporary painters in a manner comprehensible to, and perhaps initially imitated by, themselves. If by this means the door of the visually beautiful world can be, for some at least, pushed open by the smallest crack, the enterprise is overwhelmingly worthwhile. The present Whitechapel

Show is well chosen in that the pictures are singularly free from affectation, and do honestly interpret the contemporary scene in a manner acceptable to reasonably intelligent people. A number of works of charm and originality are shown, such as those by Martin Uhlman (his "New York"), Robert Powter ("Children Crossing") and Mary Fedden ("Winter"); and the well painted and humorous "The Siege of Sydney Street," featuring in the distance a youthful Sir Winston, should not be missed.

One misses there, however, both the *joie de vivre* and subtlety implicit in the work of the gifted and sedulously cultivated Vanessa Bell (Adams Gallery, 24 Davies Street, W.1). That her large designs owe something to Matisse—that most seductive of painters—is no deduction; these and her smaller more realistic works both decorate and educate. How about it, schools?

At the Beaux Arts Galleries (Bruton Mews, W.1), Mr. Middlewich blows up the subject matter of his paintings to such an extent that it seems that by some Lilliputian process the viewer has been reduced to the size of a pigmy. The impact of such shock tactics is not as yet supported by qualities of colour and design to provide adequate support. Not so Sir Matthew Smith, whose over-life still-lives at Tooth's contain some of the richest colour and best shapes which he, a master in that field, has yet devised. The late Paul Nash's delicate water-colours in the same show provide a link with the English tradition and lead us gently to Agnew's and the ever-rewarding water colours of our country.

ADRIAN DAINTRY



## AT THE PICTURES

*Picnic—The Court Jester*

IF one does not at once recognize *Picnic* (Director: JOSHUA LOGAN) as essentially something written for the stage (it is adapted by DANIEL TARADASH from the successful New York play by WILLIAM INGE), that is partly because of one or two brilliant sequences of montage and partly because of the care for apparent authenticity in the backgrounds and settings. CinemaScope and Technicolor make a wonderful job of conveying the spirit of the "Chamber of Commerce Annual Labor Day Picnic" in the woods and by the river near the little Kansas town of Neewallah, the picnic that incidentally brings to a head several emotional situations among characters to whom we have been introduced earlier. They are no less successful in showing the shrewdly-observed detail of quite small-scale interior scenes like the little bedroom shared by two young sisters. Not until afterwards does one reflect that the point of the story, the strength of the drama, have been conveyed in dialogue, which could—and on the stage presumably did—convey them in front of sets much simpler,

much less varied, and quite candidly artificial in the stage convention.

But the dialogue is good and the acting is excellent, and the film is a quite stimulating and rewarding experience. The story's theme is that always effective one of the influence on a community of a visiting stranger. The intruder here, no laudable character, is a simple, muscular, good-looking extrovert (WILLIAM HOLDEN) who was a college friend of the local rich man's son. After being foot-loose for years he has begun to feel a wish to settle down, and he comes to find his friend in the hope of being given a job where he can sit behind a desk and generally behave like an executive. The picture shows his arrival's effect on the local women, young and not so young. There are two young sisters, the younger still a schoolgirl (SUSAN STRASBERG—a beautiful performance) who is used to thinking of her elder sister as "the pretty one" and is already resigned to a life of spinsterhood; the man's quite casual attentions awaken her to other possibilities. The elder sister (KIM NOVAK) and the man are at once attracted, and in spite of the disapproval of the mother (BETTY FIELD)—there is an interesting parallel between her ambition for her daughter and the man's ambition to "be somebody"—the girl follows when he goes away. There is also an ageing schoolmistress (ROSALIND RUSSELL) who is so unsettled by the sight of the stranger's well-knit torso that after a beer or two at the picnic she . . . But this makes it all sound far too crude. It is admirably worked out, the characters are credible and—far more important—individual, and the whole thing is most excellently done. I enjoyed it.

Nothing, of course, will keep most people away from a new Danny Kaye, and quite a number of critics, to my surprise, seem to think *The Court Jester* (Directors: NORMAN PANAMA and MELVIN FRANK) is his best ever. My own feeling is a wish that he would go back to being straightforwardly funny, as he is unbeatably equipped to be; I regret his development into a figure of conscious charm, ready at the drop of a hat to sing lullabies to children or look pathetically endearing. I regret too his being given tunes to sing which, whatever the words he sings to them, have been most deliberately made very, very, almost cretinously simple and easy to remember (and forget) because of their resemblance to some public-domain tune familiar already . . .

The film is a burlesque of all "costume" stories: a hash-up of Robin Hood, King Arthur and anything else involving swordplay and acrobatics. There are wonderful spots for Mr. KAYE, but they amount to "turns"; and much of the funniest stuff here is based on quite mechanical "gag" devices—the suit of armour magnetized by lightning, and so



[Picnic]

*The Drifter*—WILLIAM HOLDEN

forth. Here again the pattern is reminiscent of the stage: a big screen full of people, the spark of action being supplied by someone who suddenly arrives or leaves. But—it is undeniable—DANNY KAYE is always worth seeing, however they like to frame his appearances.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

There are two interesting new ones in London—one from TENNESSEE WILLIAMS's play *The Rose Tattoo*, and the other from ALAN HACKNEY's novel *Private's Progress*. *Les Diaboliques* (14/12/55), *Richard III* (28/12/55), and *Les Grandes Manœuvres* (25/1/56) continue.

Of the six new releases only two, I think, were press-shown, and it happened that I did not write about either; but one, *The Phenix City Story*, is well worth seeing. RICHARD MALLETT





## ON THE AIR

## Celebrity Spot

I HAVE invented a new game—a game for tele-viewers. To play it one has to take a good look at the newspaper headlines, catalogue the celebrities mentioned, and then state clearly and concisely which TV programme will feature which celebrities. The game can be played by any number of addicts, and will afford much innocent fun and—in a dull week—some relief from ennui. Interest can be stimulated if necessary by adding pecuniary reward to the triumph of correct prediction.

Let us suppose that Mr. X, writer of the latest, serialized, best-selling, debunking biography, arrives in Britain from Hollywood where his name has been linked in gossip with that of Rita Hayworth or Marilyn Monroe. The B.B.C. boys descend on him at the airport and he is invited to appear in one of the week's programmes. He agrees with only a token display of reluctance. A conference is held at the Television Centre, the celebrity's status is determined, and his appearance allocated to a certain jubilant producer. A five-star celebrity may be given the full treatment—a "This Is Your Life" profile lasting thirty minutes—or he may be interviewed "At Home" in his London flat, surrounded by his family, his pets, books and souvenirs. A three-star celebrity may be asked to appear in "Panorama" or "Highlight," a binary in "In Town To-night," a one-pipper in "More Contrary," "Off the Record" or "Ask Pickles."

He may also be asked to take the celebrity spotlight in one of the parlour games.

I am not certain of course that my system of stratification is that followed by the B.B.C. . .



AT HOME

"Don't you think 'What's My Line?' would be more appropriate, Sir Ian? After all she's been divorced twice and was mentioned the other week by Nancy Spain."

"Couldn't Priestley do her in 'Books and Authors'? I understand she once wrote a sort of column about women's fashions. Somehow I don't quite see her in 'Panorama.'"

"Look chaps, we've already got three dabs of glamour in 'Highlight' this week—couldn't she be given to Peter for 'In Town To-night'? He's only got some old hag who's crossed the Pacific in a punt, a new group of Australian accordionists and a male table-tennis star."

"Wait a minute! I believe she lives in some old Georgian stables in Hertfordshire. Why not do a Betjeman on her?"

A variant of the game is played with celebrities who are *unlikely*—for one reason or another—ever to appear in the B.B.C. plaster-board niches of fame. Where would they put Sir Winston?

The suggestion that he might emerge from the arras and sign in for Eamonn Andrews and the hooded "What's My Line?" panel, never fails to make the players laugh uproariously. "I'm quite sure that you're not speaking in your ordinary voice," says Gilbert Harding. "Are you concerned in any way with the arts?" asks Lady Barnett. Tremendous fun. Rich.

And can you imagine Guy Burgess, flown specially from Moscow, in "This Is Your Life?"

The economic development of television depends very largely on the supply of celebrities. Viewers expect a fair ration every week and soon lose interest in the screen when it fails to light up regularly with the features of the famous and the infamous.

There is an inexhaustible supply of politicians, faded troupers of the stage, crooners, Hollywood starlets and sportsmen, but very few of them have star value. For every Boothby and Michael Foot there are hundreds of seedy looking committee men; for every Stan Matthews and R. W. V. Robins there are scores of drab pivots, custodians and sheet-anchors. Artists, oddly enough, come out well (Munnings, Dali and so on), and so do archaeologists, philosophers, scientists, conductors and cooks. But the most telegenic celebrities, obviously, are the idols of the little screen itself, the people made by TV. It is an essential function of the Television Centre to produce a steady pyrotechnic stream of popular favourites, of stars of the order of Lady Barnett, David Nixon, Katie Boyle, Jacqueline Mackenzie, Philip Harben, Ruby Murray, Alan Taylor and Mortimer Wheeler.

It's a great game.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



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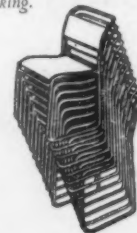
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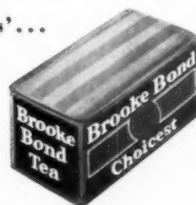
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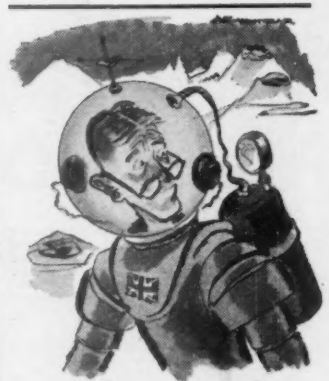
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ONE of the most significant and spectacular developments in air-sea rescue has been in the use of helicopters.

The Royal Navy is perhaps the leading exponent of this type of rescue, and it was a Naval Officer who thought out the scoop net, with which a casualty can be 'fished' out of the water in a matter of minutes.

The first man to be rescued by the net was a naval pilot, who was picked up three minutes after he had forced-landed in the sea. Since then many successful scoop net rescues have been made round Britain's shores, both of civilians and service personnel, and there is now a strong argument for including helicopters in the civilian life-saving services.







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